

them all as distinct species, contrary to the recently expressed opinion of Mr. Dresser (*Ibis*, 1892, pp. 374-380).—J. A. A.

Food Habits of Birds.—The Annual Report of the Chief of the Division of Ornithology and Mammalogy of the U. S. Department of Agriculture for the year 1892¹ contains, besides Dr. Merriam's account of the work of the Division for the year, a paper by Mr. Walter B. Barrows on 'Economic Ornithology' (pp. 193-200), which includes, besides a general statement of the progress of the work, a report on the 'Food of the Horned Larks (*Otocoris*)' by Mr. Barrows, and a report on the 'Food Habits of the Cedarbird (*Ampelis cedrorum*)' by Mr. F. E. L. Beal. Mr. Barrows concludes that Horned Larks are essentially granivorous, but subsist more or less on insects at all times, and that the nestlings are mainly fed with insects. There is of course no evidence of discrimination on the part of the birds between injurious and beneficial insects, but the whole amount of insect food—"9 $\frac{3}{8}$ per cent. for the whole year"—is too small to be of economic importance. While they occasionally pick up some newly sown grain or grass seed, the loss on this account must be trifling, their food consisting mainly of the seeds of useless or noxious weeds, and they are thus clearly entitled to protection.

Mr. Beal's conclusions in respect to the Cedarbird are that 17 per cent. of its food consists of insects and that the largest proportion of insect food is taken during the season when fruit is most abundant, and that the young while in the nest are fed to a very great extent upon insect food. Among the insects eaten were several noxious species, as the elm leaf beetle and various caterpillars.—J. A. A.

Hasbrouck on 'Evolution and Dichromatism in the Genus *Megascops*.'—In a recent paper² in the 'American Naturalist' Mr Hasbrouck has attempted a solution of the problem of dichromatism in the Screech Owls of eastern North America. The paper is evidently the result of much patient labor and presents some new information respecting the distribution of the red and gray phases of this well-known bird, his facts being presented both in tabular form and graphically by means of maps. While the paper, on casual inspection, might be regarded as an interesting and in some ways a valuable contribution to the subject under consideration, a closer examination shows it to be nearly worthless, even as regards the data on which it is ostensibly based. Hence of course we can hardly share the author's confidence that we are here presented with a satisfactory solution of the problem of dichromatism as presented in our *Megascops asio*.

¹ Report of the Ornithologist and Mammalogist for 1892. By C. Hart Merriam. Rep. Sec'y of Agriculture for 1892 (1893), pp. 181-200.

² Evolution and Dichromatism in the Genus *Megascops*. By E. M. Hasbrouck. *Am. Nat.*, 1893, pp. 521-533, 638-649, with 5 maps.